

USEPA INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT
M&B Contracting Corporation
Oil Spill, May 9, 1978
Case No.: 585-289

NOTIFICATION

On May 9, 1978 at approximately 1:20 p.m. the USEPA, Region V, Eastern District Office, Emergency Response Team was alerted of an oil spill by Mr. Julius Toth, citizen of Novi, Michigan. Mr. Toth reported that his dog kept getting into some oil in a marsh at 10 Mile Road & Novi Road. An estimated 100 gallons of oil was spilled, some of which entered a nearby swamp. I investigated for EPA.

INVESTIGATION

I contacted Pete Dillia, MDNR Investigator, who was in the area and asked him to check the reported oil spill. He reported sighting some diesel fuel in a swamp that outlets into the Walled Lake branch of the Rouge River.

I arrived at M&B Contracting Corporation, Novi, Michigan at approximately 1:15 p.m. on May 11, 1978. There I contacted Peter Saputo, Vice-President at M&B Contracting and Bill Stone of MDNR. We then toured the spill affected area (see attached map).

We began inspection of the swamp near M&B where I observed several large pockets of diesel fuel in the water (Photo's B-F). A large 12,000 gallon tank was observed on the back lot of M&B, where it had ruptured (Photo A). An oil flow pattern was traced to the nearby swampland and outlet drain.

A crew from Marine Pollution Control was hired to recover oil from the surface of the swampland using vacuum trucks and absorbent pads. Other witnesses that may have knowledge of this spill include those listed in the attached table.

According to Mr. Pete Saputo, Hatcher Oil Company delivered some diesel fuel into their storage tank, but they failed to vent the tank. The result was that one end of the tank blew off and the fuel oil was lost to the ground. The oil delivery was made about 60 days prior to my investigation and the spill was not reported. Mr. Saputo was not aware that the oil had flowed off their property and into the Walled Lake branch of the Rouge River (See attached maps).

In my opinion, once aware of the spill, the M&B Contracting Corporation, acted promptly and properly to contain and recover the estimated 200 gallons of oil that was spilled. Nevertheless, as substantiated by my observations, a harmful quantity of oil did reach the waters of the Walled Lake branch of the Rouge River and affected the adjacent marshlands. This probably could have been prevented if MDNR or EPA representatives were notified of the original spill.

Ross E. Powers (Date)
Oil & Hazardous Materials Coordinator

Table of Witnesses to M&B Contracting Corporation
Oil Spill of May 9, 1978
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4. Sebastian Mancuso, Chairman
Peter Saputo, Vice-President
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5. Mr. John Searls
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